NEWS RELEASES

For Immediate Release: May 7, 2008

IS08-110

CITY ADVISES PUBLIC ON BLACK KNOT DISEASE IN URBAN FOREST

The City of Saskatoon's Urban Forestry unit has been receiving a number of calls from citizens concerned about hard black, rough growths appearing on Chokecherry or Mayday trees. This disease is known as Black Knot, and is very common throughout Saskatoon. Black Knot infections can be controlled in the early stages of the disease by removing the infected branch(es), preferably in the winter months when the infection is not active.

Black Knot is caused by a fungus that attacks native and ornamental varieties of Chokecherry and Mayday trees. Initially, a Black Knot infection occurs in the tree branches. The following year, the hard black, rough growths will appear at an infection site. As the disease advances, branches are often completely covered by the disease, and eventually progress to the main stems developing into large wounds or knots. The disease is spread by air-borne spores that are formed over the surfaces of these knots. These spores are capable of traveling great distances and can be distributed by wind, rain, birds, or by contaminated pruning tools.

If only a few branches are infected, the disease may be controlled by pruning. In this case, the affected portion must be removed several inches below the infection. Homeowners wishing to prune their own trees should sanitize all pruning equipment with methyl alcohol in order to prevent the spread of the fungi to healthy trees. If the infection has spread to the main trunk, the whole tree should be removed.

More information on Black Knot and other tree diseases can be found on the City's website at www.saskatoon.ca, search under "t" for tree diseases.

-30-

For more information:

Ian Birse
Superintendent, Urban Forestry Section
975-2537

Geoff Mcleod
Supervisor, Pest Management
975-2766